CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of providing automatic re-provisioning of an appliance server comprising:

responsive to a user activation, removing a first application from a first partition of said partitioned hard-drive;

dynamically loading a second application into said first partition; and

automatically re-configuring said appliance server to operate said second application.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said removing step includes:

creating an image file of said first application along with an associated operating system and network parameters;

assigning a unique identifier to said image file; and

storing said image file of said first application.

3. The method of Claim 2, further comprising:

creating a parameter file of said network parameters including a system ID and IP address; and

storing said parameter file of network parameters.

4. The method of Claim 3, wherein said appliance server is connected to a network and said removing step removes said image file of said first application to a storage location on said network

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein said loading step first downloads said second application as an image file from a storage location on said network..

6. The method of Claim 5, wherein said appliance server comprises a partitioned hard-drive having at least a system partition, a network operating system (NOS partition, and an images partition, wherein said first partition is said NOS partition and said second partition is said images partition, said method further comprising:

first setting said systems partition to un-hidden;

responsive to a completion of said setting step, re-booting said server appliance utilizing a system's operating system(OS) contained in said system's partition;

automatically installing said second application into said NOS partition;

responsive to a completion of said installing step, setting said systems partition back to hidden; and

rebooting said server appliance utilizing NOS.

7. The method of Claim 6, further comprising restoring said network parameters to said appliance server following said second rebooting step to enable said appliance server to operate via its correct network settings.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein said hard drive includes a float partition, wherein, responsive to a determination that said NOS partition is not sufficiently large to hold said second application, said method includes expanding said NOS partition into a drive space of said float partition.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein, responsive to a determination that said

images partition is not sufficiently large to hold said image file of said second application, said method includes expanding said images partition into a drive space of said float partition.

10. A computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium; and

program code on said computer readable medium that enables automatic re-provisioning of an appliance server, said program code comprising code for:

responsive to a user activation, removing a first application from a first partition of said partitioned hard-drive;

dynamically loading a second application into said first partition; and

automatically re-configuring said appliance server to operate said second application.

11. The computer program product of Claim 10, wherein said removing program code includes code for:

creating an image file of said first application along with an associated operating system and network parameters;

assigning a unique identifier to said image file; and

storing said image file of said first application.

12. The computer program product of Claim 11, further comprising program code for:

creating a parameter file of said network parameters including a system ID and IP address; and

storing said parameter file of network parameters.

13. The computer program product of Claim 12, wherein said appliance server is connected to a network and said removing program code removes said image file of said first application to a storage location on said network via file transfer protocol (FTP).

14. The computer program product of Claim 13, wherein said loading program code first downloads said second application as an image file from a storage location on said network.

15. The computer program code of Claim 14, wherein said appliance server comprises a partitioned hard-drive having at least a system partition, a network operating system (NOS partition, and an images partition, wherein said first partition is said NOS partition and said second partition is said images partition, said program code further comprising code for:

first setting said systems partition to un-hidden;

responsive to a completion of said setting step, re-booting said server appliance utilizing a system's operating system(OS) contained in said system's partition;

automatically installing said second application into said NOS partition;

responsive to a completion of said installing step, setting said systems partition back to hidden; and

rebooting said server appliance utilizing NOS.

16. The computer program product of Claim 15, further comprising code for restoring said network parameters to said appliance server following said second rebooting step to enable said appliance server to operate via its correct network settings.

17. The computer program product of Claim 16, wherein said hard drive includes a float partition, wherein, responsive to a determination that said NOS partition is not sufficiently large to hold said second application, said program code includes code for expanding said NOS partition into a drive space of said float partition.

18. The computer program product of Claim 17, wherein, responsive to a determination that said images partition is not sufficiently large to hold said image file of said second application, said program code includes code for expanding said images partition into a drive space of said float partition.

19. An appliance server comprising:

a processor;

a hard disk that is partitioned into at least three partitions;

an operating system stored on a first one of said partitions;

an application program stored on a second one of said partitions and executed by said processor;

a re-provisioning utility executed by said processor that, when activated, dynamically installs a second application program on said second partition and re-configures said appliance server to support said second application program.

20. The appliance server of Claim 19, wherein further said re-provisioning utility automatically removes said application program from said second one of said partitions prior to installing said second application.

21. The appliance server of Claim 20, wherein said re-provisioning utility comprises program code for creating an image file from said application program, applying a stored image file corresponding to said second application on to said first partition, and subsequent to applying said stored image file, restoring factory network settings for said appliance server.

22. The appliance server of Claim 21, wherein first partition is a network operating system (NOS) partition, said second partition is an images partition, wherein:

said hard drive further comprises a system partition; and

said re-provisioning utility includes program code for selectively setting said system partition to hidden and un-hidden to allow a re-configuration of said appliance server.

23. The appliance server of Claim 22, wherein said re-provisioning utility includes program code to reboot said appliance server during said re-provisioning operation.

24. The appliance server of Claim 23, further comprising network connectivity that connects said appliance server to a network and allows transfer of image files to and from said network.

25. A network comprising:

network accessible storage locations;

file transfer protocol backbone; and

an appliance server that comprises

a hard disk that is partitioned into at least three partitions;

an operating system stored on a first one of said partitions;

an application program stored on a second one of said partitions and executed by said processor; and

a re-provisioning utility that, when activated, dynamically installs a second application program on said second partition and re-configures said appliance server to support said second application program.

26. The network of Claim 25, wherein further said re-provisioning utility automatically removes said application program from said second one of said partitions prior to installing said second application.

27. The network of Claim 26, wherein said re-provisioning utility comprises:

program code for creating an image file from said application program, applying a stored image file corresponding to said second application on to said first

partition, and subsequent to applying said stored image file, restoring factory network settings for said appliance server; and

program code for selectively setting said system partition to hidden and un-hidden to allow a re-configuration of said appliance server.